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de ce dernier nombre, du moins jusqu'à ce que l'on soit parvenu par une longue suite d'observations sur l'hygromètre, à introduire cet instrument dans la mesure des hauteurs par le baromètre."*

I may in conclusion observe, that in assuming, with the view of calculating the expansion produced by moisture, that the pressure to be employed is the geometric mean of the corrected pressures given by the barometer at the two stations, I am quite aware that I am assigning to it but an approximate value. An exact expression for the pressure to be employed admits of being investigated;† but its introduction into the formula, while it would give the latter complexity of form, and thus render it less suited for practical use, would conduct to results not appreciably different from those given by the more simple methods just explained.

Mr. Clibborn presented to the Acadcmy an ancient stone image, called in some places a Shela-na-gig; and read the following extract from a letter from Dr. Charles Halpin :

"About two years ago, as I drove past the *old graveyard* of Lavey Church, I discovered this curious figure, laid loosely, in a half reclining position, on the top of a gate pier that had been built recently, to hang a gate upon, at the ancient entrance of the old church-yard. I believe the stones used in building those piers were taken from the ruins of

* Systeme du Monde, p. 89.

† Let $\frac{\log. \frac{p}{p'}}{m\left(\frac{1}{p'} - \frac{1}{p}\right)}$, m being the modulus of the common system of logarithms, $= P$. Then if v be the column of dry air, and that, when saturated with moisture whose force is f , it becomes v' , we will have

$$v' = v \times \frac{P}{P - f}.$$

For the very elegant expression for P I am indebted to my friend, Professor Renny.

the old church of Lavey (there is scarcely a trace of the old church on the site it occupied); and I think probable, that this figure was found amongst them, and laid in the position in which I found it, by the masons employed at the work. I was not aware of its real value, until apprised of it by my brother, the Rev. N. J. Halpin. He immediately recognized it as a 'Sheela-na-gig,' and the most perfect of any he had seen. I thought it my duty to protect this precious relic from the hammer.

"Lavey church lies about fifty miles north-west of Dublin, on the mail-coach road. There is a neat new church near the site of the old one."

Mr. Petrie having expressed a desire that some further information should be given about this figure, and others, of the same kind, of which, he understood, there were two in the museum of the Academy, which had belonged to the late Dean Dawson :

Mr. Clibborn explained that he had received notices or outlines of ten other figures, of the same kind, which had been found in old churches and castles, and from their position in the walls, sometimes hid in the course, and from the difference of the stone, it was probable they had been used in older buildings, so that their actual antiquity could not be determined by the age of the buildings in which they had been found. From the form of the stones on which several of these figures were carved, it was surmised that some of them had been originally used as grave-stones, and probably intended to act as charms to avert the evil eye, or its influence, from the place. These figures have a great similitude to others used elsewhere for this purpose formerly, as well as at present, by the natives of the east coast of Africa.

He also explained that, about five years ago, when, in company with several advocates of the O'Brien theory of the Round Towers of Ireland, he was led to express an opinion that, possibly, these buildings, though erected subsequently

to the introduction of *nominal* Christianity into Ireland, might still have, to a certain extent, some analogies to views entertained by the African and Asiatic ascetics, and which might have been imported into Ireland by the first Christians, in the third century ; who, if from Africa or Spain, may have brought with them more or less of Gnosticism (or views analogous to it), and with it notions and practices not very unlike, apparently the same originally with those, by which the author above-mentioned endeavoured to explain the nature and origin of the Round Towers. The first nominal Christians, if he had been correctly informed, who came to Ireland, were lay ascetics ;* and, like the ascetics of Egypt and the East, they selected secluded valleys in the mountains, or islands in lakes, where they gave themselves up to those penitential observances calculated, according to their views, to destroy the “ Hylic, or material,” to humble and conquer the “ psychic, or animal,” and to elevate and cultivate the “ pneumatic, or spiritual,” principle of their natures.

It was argued that, if the tower was the residence of the Irish ascetics during their lives, it may have been considered the type of the *plus*, male, “ pneumatic,” or spiritual principle ; and so the earth, grave, crypt, or church near it, in which were deposited the bodies, or material principles of the deceased, originally derived from mother earth, may have been considered the type of the negative female, hylic, or material principle, and have been considered analogous to Ge, or De-meter, to whom the body of the dead returned, by interment ; and, hence, it was argued that, if O'Brien's theory were true in this qualified sense, it should apply to the churches or graves near the towers or residences of the ascetics, where we should find types or indications of the negative principle. Mr. R. P. Collis, who was present, im-

* See Moore's Hist. p. 221. The extract from St. Patrick's letter: “ ubi nunquam pervenerat qui baptizaret, aut clericos ordinaret, aut populos consummaret.”

mediately mentioned the female figure at Rochestown, and stated that he had heard of several others in the same neighbourhood, and he recommended an inquiry into the subject, which led to the discovery of several more figures of the same kind in different places.

The "hylic principle," including the materials composing the body, was little more than the *locus*, where the battle of the two other principles was fought during the life of the ascetic;* and if he persevered to death in the practices prescribed for the evolution of the pneumatic principle, and lost his life in these observances, or in the fulfilment of the duties which belonged to this system, his victory over the hylic or psychic principles was complete, and he was said to have arrived at "perfect virtue," and consequently became, according to Asiatic views, an inferior, or little Bauddha, which may, possibly, give us an original of the name of Monasterboise; in Irish, the monastery of *Boaithin*, or the little Bauddha. The legend of St. Colum Cille, who struck his crosier against the glass ladder, by which he went to heaven, which belongs to this place, and which strongly corroborates a Ceylonese legend, increases the suspicion, that the system which was called here Christian, originally may have been analogous to that ascetic system which existed under the same name in Egypt and the East, and was closely allied to Bauddhism, which was, and is, a system of Asceticism,† and

* This doctrine is the same, or nearly the same, as that which is called Dualism, which attributes creation and life to the action and reaction of two principles, *plus* and *minus*, or positive and negative, which were personified by the ancients under every species of antagonism. The fighting dogs and serpents of the Irish are, apparently, manifestations of it, applied specially to the daily strife, or "cross," of these two principles in the body of the ascetic.

† When O'Brien's book was written our knowledge of the Bauddist system was very limited. Now its antiquity, history, principles, and corruptions, are better understood, through the labours of Mr. Prinsep, Fa-hian's Travels, The Mahavansa, &c.

mixed up with more or less pure Gnosticism; for, "the greatest part of the Gnostics adopted very austere rules of life, recommended rigorous abstinence, and prescribed severe bodily mortifications, with the view of purifying and exalting the mind," like the Irish ascetics. "These tenets were *revived* in Spain, in the fourth century, by a sect called Priscillianists," where they may have been, to a certain degree, suppressed by the instrumentality of missionaries and seculars from Rome. The same system which existed in Spain previously, and which planted those views there afterwards, may have also planted them here; and the same means which suppressed them there for a time, may have here suppressed them; or there may have been, to a certain degree, for several centuries, a compromise between the advocates of both systems, and that which was finally adopted here, and called Christianity, may have, in a covert way, contained much Gnosticism, particularly that branch of it which was adopted by the ascetics, or Culdees, and small religious communities, and by whom the first towers may have been originally built.* It is a curious circumstance, not hitherto noticed by any writer on the Round Towers, that the technical term for a Bauddist monastery in the East, is a *tower*; no matter whether it be a cave in the earth, or a cabin or palace on its surface.

We may add to these notices another notion of the

* The following extract, from the very old Irish MS. called the Speckled Book, in the Academy, will explain and confirm what I have stated concerning Irish asceticism: "When, then, said St. Bartholomew, the Son of God was born, he was tempted by the Devil, but Christ overcame, by fastings in the wilderness, him who overcame Adam, in Paradise, through gluttony; for it was meet that Christ, the son of the Virgin, should overpower him who overpowered Adam, the son of the virgin, i.e. *the son of holy earth*; for the (mother) earth of which Adam was formed was virgin, because it had not then been polluted by iron, nor by the blood of man, nor had it been opened for the interment of man in it at that time."

Gnostics, which was, "that malevolent genii presided in nature, and occasioned diseases and calamities, wars, and desolations; induced them to apply themselves to the study of magic, in order to weaken the powers, or suspend the influence, of these malignant agents." This doctrine of their's was, no doubt, extended and carried out fully in every mode and form, and led them to consider themselves, and all things living on the earth, to be under the influence and subject to the evils caused by the instrumentality of these evil genii, who, in some cases, attached themselves to individuals, who were then said to have the evil eye, or who became afflicted with what is termed "covetousness," which blasted everything which they desired, and made it unlucky; and its possessor was shunned and avoided, as he was subject to that malign influence which is technically termed the "evil eye." This influence was greatly dreaded by the living, for themselves, their children, cattle, and goods, and their houses; and in many places, even now, people put up over their doors, over their hearths, and in many other places, talismans, to give them good luck, or to take away or neutralize the evil look, which brings them bad luck, by averting the evil eye, also considered to be a distinct individuality, or genius. The term "good look," or "luck," is incorporated into the English language, though the belief of the evil eye is nearly lost in England, where it was universal. It still exists in Scotland, and we find it also in Ireland, where various methods are still practised to avert its influence from children, cattle, churns of milk, houses, &c.

One of the most efficacious is the horse shoe, which is called "the lucky horse-shoe" for this reason, and it is nailed to doors and gateways for luck, by people who have no notion that they are, probably, putting up equivalents for those hideous figures which the people call shela-na-gigs, one of which was lately discovered at Kiltynan Castle, by

Mr. Thomas Oldham, which held the lucky horse-shoe in one hand, and a cross, or dagger, in the other.

The horse-shoe, and the triangle, Δ , or ∇ , &c., and the trefoil, are all, apparently, emblems for the same antidote, which the evil eye abhors, and by which the mechanic's wife was not only able to identify the evil genius himself, but to eject him from her house, and save her husband's body and soul, the stake which he proposed to play for. In this country the peasantry are said to entertain similar notions of the great efficacy of the same means, which is said to be "capable of driving the Devil away," the use for which, it is surmised, these figures were intended.

Mr. William Hackett, the moment he saw a drawing of one of the figures, declared it was a "fetish;" the African name of a figure which closely resembles the shela-na-gigs, and is commonly used for the purpose of averting the evil eye, and giving good luck. On the north coast of Africa certain emblems, carved in stone, are placed over the doors for this purpose; and formerly it would appear that certain parts of animals were used instead. In Italy the peasantry, in the neighbourhood of Naples, have a complete system "of magic" for averting the evil-eye, which consists, to a great extent, of exposures and practices, which are compared to the ancient orgies, and calculated to eject or avert the evil eye, or *genius*, from a place, and drive him and his colleagues, and their influence, beyond certain limits.

These figures were, probably, intended as *fetishes*, or charms, to keep off the evil eye, or its influence; and, consequently, they are found placed over doors of churches and castles, &c. In many instances they are evidently much older, and of a totally different material and style of art, to the building in which they are found. The workmanship is quite unequal, and the style of the figures differ very much. They are not copies of a common original, but, generally,

the most hideous and frightful-looking female figure which the stonemason could devise. There is, however, in the best sculptured figures a certain expression of countenance which resembles that of death. In these the hair is very long, and there is no appearance of the tonsure, which occurs in others. The former have a strong resemblance to a Mithraic figure, published in the *Archæologia*, XIX. p. 74, and also to another figure, in Ingham's "Monumenti Etruschi," T. 3, Tav. XXIII. Both of these, it is thought, were also used as *fetishes*, or figures intended to drive away the evil influence, and obtain good luck instead.

The hair of some of the figures appears to be intended to represent a peculiar tonsure, and the persons of women represented are apparently attenuated by fasting and that course of life which the Gnostics and ascetics so strongly insisted on, as the means of gaining the victory over the hylic or psychic (together, the evil principle) in themselves, and what St. Bridget so ably contended for in herself, and those who placed themselves under her rules. In these almost skeleton figures we have an analogy between the *rule* of abstinence of the Gnostics, and also their notion about amulets, abraxas, fetishes, and the evil genius; and hence the probability, that the use to which they have been assigned is the correct one, independent of any other considerations which arise from the practices now said to be efficacious in Ireland, &c., in ejecting the evil genius, or averting the evil eye; and which formerly, as well as at present, were common in Africa, Italy, Spain, Ireland, &c.

With the ancient Egyptians the *cruz ansata* appears to have been the great emblem of good luck, prosperity, and so forth. It appears to have been the antidote to the evil eye which we find mentioned in Prov. xxiii. 6, and xxviii. 22, and the Gnostics and early Egyptian Christians appear to have adopted it, without any alteration or change in its form from that used by the old Egyptians. The *cruz ansata* ap-

pears to have been a substitute for the gesture called the *fico* of the ancient Romans and modern Neapolitans, which combined the Dualism, or positive and negative principle. It is still used, according to the Canon De Jorio, when a lay Neapolitan wishes another good luck, when he is going on an expedition, &c. And we find the *fico*, combined with other emblems into the form of the *crux ansata*, in the museum at Naples, where there are many examples analogous to many Gnostic emblems, which are well known; some of which have been published by the Rev. Dr. Walsh. One found in the baggage of Prince Charles Edward, after the battle of Culloden, has on it a woman, in a better style of art than that of the shela-na-gigs; but, probably, intended for the same purpose, “*as a charm*” to avert the evil eye, and gain the good luck instead.

The crosses which are placed round certain enclosures in Ireland, and act as *termini*, or boundary marks, had probably the same use formerly, to keep off the evil-eye and its influence from the enclosure, so that the sleep of the dead might not be disturbed; hence the request to pray for the repose of the soul of Bran, on the tombstone in the museum, and the usual “may he rest in peace”; terms calculated to neutralise the disturbing influence of the evil-eye principle. In Asia and Africa things owned by individuals are frequently *tabooed*, or marked with the cross, or circle, crescent, or both combined, which, it is believed, protects them from the evil-eye, and consequently from being coveted by people, or rendered unlucky. This practice, or the notions which caused it, appears to be almost as old as man himself, and is found incorporated into the language, and occupying a greater or less proportion of the popular belief in every country. The pattern which composes the tracery on our cross of Cong, and other old Irish shrines, reliquaries, and the tomb at Cashel, which represents an animal like a dog or serpent always worrying itself, or another creature of the

same kind, may probably be a type of the doctrine of abstinence or mortification of the flesh,* which to the ascetic was his daily cross, and antidote to the hylic or evil principle, which he considered himself bound to bear, and which his master before him had borne victorious to death, and by which he became exalted to the highest rank in heaven, consistent with our extract from the Irish MS., in which we find at least one of the doctrines mentioned, which the ascetics magnified into a constant rule of life, and made it the means of conquering the evil principle in themselves, to which these figures, it is thought, may have been charms or external antidotes, like the cross and bells, &c., which they ornament, which are covered with dog and knotted serpent patterns, crossing each other continually, and supposed to be emblematic of the ascetic principle, or daily cross, and antidotes of the evil eye or principle. By this rule the stone in the museum presented by Mr. Webber, which apparently represents two dogs fighting, may have been an ingenious device to hide from common eyes, but to exhibit this principle where it would be understood, instead of a *shela-na-gig* of the common form, and so it may have been intended originally as a *fetish* or charm to the house or castle from whence it was removed. Besides the three figures now in the Museum, I have been informed of the existence of many

* The emblem, or device, for Christianity on the Roman medals, given by the Rev. Dr. Walsh, is analogous to the monstrous figures of the double dog and serpent patterns referred to, which, it is surmised, may be emblems of the ascetic principle. He observes: "It may be that Dioclesian wished to represent only the depraved and corrupt sectarians, of which this figure (*in his plate*) is the emblem; and that his more atrocious colleague, careless of distinction, exhibited the genius of Christianity, under any form, as equally the object of his persecution." There is a figure called the Idol, at Cashel, with fish-tail extremities, with a face like the *shela-na-gig* presented by Mr. Halpin. It appears to connect, or identify, the designs on the Roman medals with those Irish figures.

Shela-na-gigs in different parts of Ireland ; but have received drawings and exact descriptions of five others only.

1. The first discovered and described by Mr. R. P. Collis. It is in the gable of an old church at Rochestown, County Tipperary. This figure is called a Shela-na-gig, by the country people, and as it was the first found it has supplied the name to all the others.

2. In the church at Dowth there is a Shela-na-gig, carved in stone quite different to that which composes the walls of the church. This figure appears to have been originally a head or foot-stone of a grave. It was said to be a figure of St. Shanahan, by the person who shewed me the place. At Lusk there was a figure called the Idol, which was buried by the late Rev. Mr. Tyrrell. It appears to have been a Shela-na-gig also.

3. Found over the door of the keep of Ballinahinch Castle, near Cashel. In this figure there is an appearance of the tonsure. It was the opinion of the person who examined it, that it had been inserted in the wall, and might have been taken from the ruins of the church, which are quite near the Castle.

4. Found in the south front of Moykarkey Castle, County Tipperary. This figure has a more finished and modern air than any other of which I have drawings. The country people have a legend, and call it Cathleen Owen.* It also appears inserted into the wall, and there is a ruin of a church quite near, from whence it might have been procured, to bring ' luck about the house.'

5. Found in the wall of the old church on the White Island, Lough Erne, in the demesne of Colonel Archdall. This figure occurs lying on its side, and is in the course low down near the door, and appears to have been a part of the

* This legend may be equally authentic as that about the dog and wolf stone, presented by Mr. Webber.

materials of an older building, which were used in the building of the church now in ruins. In the same way one of the figures in the Museum, from the Dawson collection, appears to have been built into the wall of the church where it was found. Under such circumstances, the actual antiquity of these curious figures is quite problematical. The subject is a new one, and well deserving of the attention of antiquaries, to whom this notice is submitted more as a suggestion for consideration than as an opinion. The number of facts known are few, and probably it may be premature to attempt a generalization.

April 22.

SIR WM. R. HAMILTON, LL. D., President, in the Chair.

READ,—a letter from the Secretary of the Lord Lieutenant, presenting to the Academy the stones containing the inscription from the old bridge of Athlone.

RESOLVED,—That the thanks of the Academy be given to His Excellency the Lord Lieutenant for his donation.

The Rev. Professor Graves read a paper on the Algebraic Geometry of Curves traced upon given Surfaces.

Let $u = \phi(x, y, z) = 0$ be the equation of a surface referred to ordinary rectangular coordinates. Its complete differential will be

$$pdx + qdy + rds = 0.$$

Making

$$x = \frac{p}{r}, \text{ and } y = \frac{q}{r},$$

Mr. Graves denominates x and y the *normal coordinates* of a point on the surface. When they are known, the x, y, z of the point are determined by the three equations